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INS. B11 CLAIMS

1   A requirements management database system for data associated with a production lifecycle comprising:

5   means for storing a first set of data elements representing a first set of requirements;

        means for storing a second set of data elements representing a second set
10   of requirements;

        means for storing a third set of data elements representing a functional design specification;

15   means for assigning a unique identifier to each data element of each of said first, second and third sets of data elements;

        means for establishing a set of links arranged to directly associate identifiers of data elements from said first set and to directly associate identifiers
20   of data elements from said second set with identifiers of data elements from said third set.

2.   A requirement management database system according to Claim 1 further comprising means for storing a set of said identifiers assigned to elements of said
25   third sets;

        means for establishing a set of links arranged to directly associate said set of identifiers with the corresponding identifiers of said third set.

30   3.   A requirement management database system according to any preceding claim in which said means for assigning identifiers assigns identifiers comprising:

        a first part identifying the set of elements to which the identifier is assigned;

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a second part identifying the data element to which the identifier is assigned within the set of elements;

a third part indicating the type of data element to which the identifier is assigned.

4.   A requirements management database system according to any preceding claim in which the means for establishing a set of links is operable to establish a further set of links to associate identifiers of data elements from a further set with data elements from said third set.

5.   A requirements management database system according to any preceding claim further comprising means for associating one or more attributes such as a compliance attribute to one or more of said links.

6.   A requirements management database system according to any preceding claim further comprising a graphical user interface comprising:

a first means for displaying data elements;

a second means for displaying the identifier associated with the data element displayed by the first means;

a third means for displaying associated identifiers;

and wherein the user interface is operable, in response to an input command, to cause the second means to display the data element associated with an identifier displayed by the third means.

7.   A method of processing data in a database system for data associated with a production lifecycle comprising the steps of:

storing a first set of data elements representing a first set of requirements;

storing a second set of data elements representing a second set of requirements;

5   storing a third set of data elements representing a functional design specification;

assigning a unique identifier to each data element of each of said first, second and third sets of data elements;

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establishing a set of links arranged to directly associate identifiers of data elements from said first set and to directly associate identifiers of data elements from said second set with identifiers of data elements from said third set.

15 8. A method of processing data in a database system according to Claim 7 further comprising the steps of:

storing a set of said identifiers assigned to elements of said third sets;

20   establishing a set of links arranged to directly associate said set of identifiers with the corresponding identifiers of said third set.

9.   A method of processing data in a database system according to claims 7 or 8 wherein in said assigning step identifiers are assigned identifiers comprising:

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a first part identifying the set of elements to which the identifier is assigned;

a second part identifying the data element to which the identifier is assigned within the set of elements;

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a third part indicating the type of data element to which the identifier is assigned.

10.   A method of processing data in a database system according to any

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of claims 7 to 9 further comprising the step of establishing a further set of links to associate identifiers of data elements from a further set with data elements from said third set.

11.   A method of processing data in a database system according to any of Claims 7 to 10 further comprising the step of associating one or more attributes , such as a compliance attribute, to one or more of said links.

12.   A method of processing data in a database system according to any of claim further comprising the steps of:

displaying data elements in a first area;

displaying, in a second area, the identifier associated with the data element displayed in the first area;

displaying associated identifiers in a third area;

and, in response to an input command, displaying in the second area the data element associated with an identifier displayed in the third area.